

Minutes of the September 2012 NJLA Member Services Committee meeting

Minutes by Lindsey Meyer

The Member Services Committee met on Sept. 13, 2012 at the JFK branch of the Piscataway Public Library.

Present were Laverne Mann, Lindsey Meyer (officers); Kathryn Cannarozzi, Danielle Cesena, Renee Cohen, Steve Hrubes, Megan Kociolek, Michael Maziekien, Robin Rockman, Emily Weisenstein (committee members); James Keebler, Karen Klapperstuck (NJLA officers); Heidi Cramer (MSC subcommittee officer). Absent was Tyler Rousseau (committee member).

New MSC chair Laverne Mann began by thanking outgoing chair Michael Maziekien for his stellar service. She credited him with growing the committee and increasing NJLA visibility through social events. A slideshow of highlights from the past year included pix from the Medieval Times show, the mixer at the New Brunswick Hilton, "Why I Am an NJLA Member" videos, and the committee meeting at Jenkinson's Aquarium.

2011-2012 Accomplishments

Laverne said the committee's main goal is to boost membership. In reviewing the 2011 figures, she pointed out that at the end of 2011, we had 1,438 members, which is down from a high of 1,800 in 2008-9. Some of the loss was due to retirements, job position loss, and furloughs, but there are still many working librarians who aren't members.

Pat Tumulty recently sent out membership appeals to 90 directors, 104 non-member conference attendees, and sent emails to students about the student rate. Last year, committee members contacted many non-renewals personally and we'll do this again this year following the response to Pat's letters.

Laverne showed the membership packet that all committee members should take to networking events. One incentive to join is discounts on conference and workshops. Youth Services Forum has a large price difference between member and non-member prices and there was general agreement that this is a good idea. In the past year, we've become active on Facebook, Twitter, & Flickr and Laverne would like to see more outreach through social media.

Michael reported that the membership drive was not as successful as hoped. He called it a mixed blessing because a glut of early renewals could have created accounting issues. Laverne asked if we want to consider splitting the yearly fee into 3 payments, so that the amount isn't so overwhelming. All 3 payments would be authorized at once, so people wouldn't need to remember to make the payments. NPR does it, why not NJLA? General agreement.

Our MSC Facebook page has 79 "likes".

Member Services Responsibilities & Goals

We reviewed our committee's functions as laid out in the "NJLA Code for Committees and their Subcommittees" on the NJLA website:

- To identify the needs of personal, institutional, commercial and affiliate members.
- To address these needs, either through the Committee or through cooperation with another Committee, Section, Roundtable or Task Force within the Association.
- To promote and enhance membership in the Association through recruitment of new members, and the preparation and distribution of membership materials.
- To review membership/category fees annually.
- To coordinate the activities of the Personnel Administration Subcommittee and the Subcommittees for Scholarship, Nominations and Elections, and Publications, and any other subcommittees and ad hoc committees under this committee.

Karen's goals for our committee are membership retention and growth and to make membership benefits more obvious. Some of those benefits are: return on investment (Michael), networking (Karen), opportunities to write for the NJLA newsletter (Heidi), and advocacy in Trenton (Laverne).

Laverne's goals for our committee include attracting more members from public, academic, institutional, special, and school libraries as well as reaching out to library school students and retired librarians. Laverne and James agreed it's not a good idea to raise membership fees at this time but OK to raise program fees if necessary.

Social Events

2011-2012:

Our Medieval Times event brought out 80+- members and was a rousing success. We had a well-attended mixer at the New Brunswick Hilton and we agreed we should hold more of these in different locations around the state. We also staffed the hospitality table and co-sponsored the Dance Party at the NJLA Conference.

For 2012-2013:

Laverne posted a Facebook event poll and mini-golf got the most votes. Megan likes "Monster Mini-Golf" in Marlboro, which is indoors and has group rates and no deposit. She and Tyler will arrange. "Apparently you can get married there, too," said Megan.

Steve described "Biblioball", an annual (?) event held in Brooklyn, that we may want to shamelessly copy. Bands, dancing, trapeze artists, price about \$25/person, open to all – not just librarians. Laverne was concerned about massive planning. Steve will contact Desk Set about possible collaboration. <http://thedeskset.org/biblioball/>

Upcoming:

Adult Services Forum table will be staffed according to who's going. Probably Michael and Lindsey. Laverne asked the committee to think about what new social events we want to arrange, such as a members-only event (to make member benefits more obvious).

Assignments for October Meeting

25-year members: *Renee and Lindsey*. The last time these members were acknowledged was apparently at the NJLA Conference of 2010. The ones who could be located were given a certificate and a large Hershey's bar with a custom-made NJLA wrapper created by Heidi.

Outreach to non-members – investigate these groups and find out how to get them to join NJLA

Library school students: *Michael, Robyn, and Steve*

Retired librarians – *Kathy*

Public librarians – *Danielle and Emily*

School librarians – *Robin*

Special libraries – *Megan*

Academic – *We'll ask Trevor*

Laverne reported that Trevor suggested highlighting a member-of-the-month or member-of-the-week which could be publicized on Facebook. Karen said the Executive Board would support this initiative and that we could publish it in the newsletter. → We should all bring suggestions to the next meeting – who should be first? Karen requested that we call Sue Rice to confirm that our choice is a member before bestowing garlands.

Further Event Discussion

Best are free things (such as hiking) or fund-raisers, where all or part of the fee goes to NJLA. Megan suggested Grounds for Sculpture, partly because it's toward south Jersey. Laverne will check group rates and add \$10 for NJLA. Asbury Lanes and the Stone Pony were also mentioned as possibilities.

We discussed having “members only” events. Karen pointed out that most people who attend events are already members (except for SOs). Michael said we'd have to sell tickets in advance so we can check membership status. Steve said people coming to a members-only event would feel better about having spent money to join.

Conference

The online proposal page will go live in mid-October so → we need to come up with ideas for sessions and social event(s). In 2012, we staffed the hospitality table but didn't sponsor a session. Lindsey reviewed her attempts to hire a speaker from the Heim Group, workplace communications consultants specializing in gender-related issues. They would have been great but were unaffordable. For 2013, she suggested game designer superstar Ken Rolston as a keynote and session speaker. He indicated to her that he'd be very affordable and Karen requested info.

Membership ID

Michael pointed out that NJLA doesn't have membership cards and suggested tying them to incentives. Heidi said that cards were discontinued because of the expense and labor involved. She reviewed past attempts at incentives, such as car insurance discounts.

Megan suggested a conference app through Boopsie, with MSC content. Heidi said many people don't check the NJLA website. It's fairly static and apparently mostly used to check the job board, so an app may be very appropriate.

Other

→ Heidi requested feedback from the committee about how NJLA can use social media – should they do more with Twitter, etc?

NEXT MEETING: Monday, October 29 at 2 pm at the Nutley Public Library, hosted by Megan Kociolek.